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ZARATHUSHTRIAN ANALOGIES

IN DANIEL, REVELATIONS, AND IN SOME OTHER BOOKS OF
THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

THE supposed Zoroastrian elements in the Book of Daniel have always been considered to be very striking; but as they form a part of a whole with their predecessors and successors, they cannot be estimated altogether aside from other Exilic matter. So that the entire ancient religious literature of the Jews is brought into the question, though as a matter of course the limits of the space at my disposal here do not permit me to treat the whole of it in this section. And if Zoroastrian elements appear anywhere at all within the Jewish ancient literature, we may take it for granted that the entire mass of Zoroastrian doctrine must have exerted the most decided influence upon the developments of Jewish Exilic and of the Christian theology, for a part here proves the presence and influence of the whole.

And this at once, as I need not say, entails the gravest possible consequences in our decisions as to the vital matter of precedence or sequence in the intellectual forces here brought into consideration, as they develop themselves and become manifest in our histories of religious thought.

The objective before us, then, is to illustrate, from various points of view taken here and for the present necessarily from restricted portions of the Semitic Scriptures,

the admitted fact that the Jewish tribes entered a new intellectual world at the so-called Captivity, and then that this sphere was largely dominated by Medo-Persian as well as by Babylonian ideas, and that it was therefore to a degree Zoroastrian, and that upon this it was built up as a mass of national religious sentiment and system.

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It is, however, necessary for me to interpose here an important precautionary salvo. It is this: that the Persian theology with which we are here called upon to deal, is, if we must judge from its surviving documents, divisible into two branches or schools: the Median, the more thoroughly Zoroastrian as represented by the Zend-Avesta, and the Southern school of Persepolis as represented by the Achæmenian Inscriptions. It is of course possible that these two portions of the Mazda-worship interest may not really have differed from each other as much as their now surviving documents would seem to indicate; while their close relation in spite of all conceivable divergence is not for a moment to be contested, for they have much that is essential in common; and they must each be considered as at times expressing but one and the same phase of religious conception; but still it is safer to form our judgments from these actually surviving writings, particularly as each of them is of a signal character in its particular sphere.

So looked upon, it is chiefly the Median Mazda worship, that is to say, the Zoroastrian, centering in Ragha, which is here brought into bearing with the grave questions which we are discussing, rather than the Achæmenian or Daric inscriptional elements on which I here chiefly rely, and to which I here first of all refer as at once. With the two lores in view, that is to say, with that of the Exilic Pharisaism on the one side and that of the Zend-Avesta on the other, we have two occurrences of the most im-

portant possible of religious ideas that have ever been propagated, present in two religious systems brought closely into connection with each other, as I show just below, one of which, the Jewish Exilic, dominates all Western civilization; and this actual historical literary connection between them, if it be proved to our satisfaction to be a fact, cannot help but afford occasion for the deepest possible reflection and inquiry, which must also be regarded as pre-eminently interesting from several points of view.

We must first of all mention and make clear what may be called the incontestible points of literary connection between these Iranian and Semitic lores from this line of thought, corroborative particulars from other sources following in due course; for, as I have said, if anything at all approaching to a literary connection between the two centers of intelligence can be established, our case is by the very fact of it made out, with all that it involves; for Zoroastrianism is the main document of our eschatology, a fact which should be taken everywhere for granted, as the slightest examination would confirm it.* And first of all in our further procedure we have to note the general features of the situation.

* * *

The entire mass of the Medo-Persian Mazda-worship is, as we assert, brought into close association with Judaism in an unparalleled manner in the familiar passages which meet us in Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, the later Isaiah, Daniel, etc., and in the entire Exilic and post-Exilic Jewish and Christian literatures, that is to say, when this mass of profoundly interesting religious detail is studied in connection with the Achæmenian inscriptions of the Persian kings whose edicts are cited in the Bible. To

* From start to finish we have everywhere in Zoroastrianism the main points of our eschatology; there was no other lore at the period of the oldest Avesta which so expressed the doctrines almost in modern terms.

speak of Exilic Jewish history is then to speak of Persian history in one of its most interesting episodes, and vice versa; for such allusions center in the superlative circumstances of the so-called Return of the Jewish Tribes and the re-establishment of their religion upon its original representative site with the to us so momentous consequences. And no statements could be stronger, as might be said, than those well-known familiar ones which are everywhere so prominent in the documents themselves, with perhaps Isaiah xlv or xlv at their head. The Persian Emperor who represented his religion (see the inscriptions) is there accepted as the "anointed of Yahveh"—an expression which carried with it the assurance of the existence of the deepest possible religious sentiment with regard to the exalted personage to whom it alludes; and this with a salvo in verse 7 which doubly accentuates the affirmatives. So much for the connection *prima facie*. But when we have said this we must proceed to mention here, although still only in a preliminary sense, some individual particulars, as a further succinct but necessary introduction of our subject, though some of these will necessarily occupy our attention again in their detail further on.

* * *

The first of them would be perhaps that truly monumental circumstance in the Medo-Persian Jewish religious history, the presence of the "Seven Spirits" of the Zend-Avesta in Job, Zechariah, Tobit and the Apocalypse. The first mentioned, the occurrence in Job, indeed lacks the mention of the number "Seven," but the "walking to and fro in the Earth" is characteristic, while in the occurrence in Tobit xii. 15 we have both the words together, and the ideas are especially clinched to the Iranian work by the mention of one of the oldest of the Gathic demons (Tobit iii. 8, 17; viii. 3) in close association with them (the seven Ameshaspends), added to which we have the Avesta city

Ragha mentioned more than once, and all in the same book.

The tale of the Book of Tobit seems indeed to be a story largely centering about the Zoroastrian capital, if we might so call the most prominent place mentioned in the Avesta: see Tobit i. 10, 14: "And I went into Media and kept ten talents of silver in trust with Gabriel the brother of Gabrias at Rases, a city in Media"; see also Tobit iv. 1; iv. 20; v. 5; vi. 9; vi. 12; ix. 2; xiv. 4.

Ragha, as we know, was so completely Zoroastrian that the very name "Zarathushtra" became a civic title there of high order, and it was even used in the superlative degree as "most Zarathushtra," totally losing the significance of its original application to the particular family of the distinguished prophet.

Kohut* also with much probability likewise found the common Persian word Khshathra, which is also the name of the third Avestic Ameshaspand, in Esther as well as in Daniel. This would of course only help to illustrate still more the close Persian relation, which we may regard as hardly contested; but with much sagacity he noticed the "uer" of Ahasuerus, which equals "vēr"; and in it he with much plausibility saw not only the Persian Khshathra—the "Ahas" having resulted, as so often in similar cases, from contraction plus the added incipient "A"—but he saw the Avestic Khshathra-vairya, the "vēr" representing this latter part of the compositum, as indeed it does also in the Pahlavi middle Persian, Khshathra and Vairya also occurring in close association even in the Gathas.† The asserted analogies between the Persian, the Jewish, and the Babylonian month-names, are also particularly significant. Not pausing upon what may be considered especially controversial in Benfey's attempted

* See his work cited below, now of course antiquated, but still suggestive.

† If indeed this recognition be not beyond dispute, it yet awakens our attention and our zeal to search for other analogies.

identifications here (see also his successors), it will be convenient to call especial attention to the signal word "Adar" (Atar), which is purely Persian, both in its literal meaning and in its here so significant application. No scholar can have failed to become aware that the word for fire, while well-nigh the most common word of its kind in the Persian, is at the same time perhaps the most sacred of its sort in that language; for the element was personified as an Angel and has a Yasht really, though not formally, devoted to it, and this in the genuine if yet later Avesta.

Zoroastrians have also been for a long time called "Fire worshipers," on account of their especial use of fire in worship, which was rather more pronounced than its adoption among the Hebrews except perhaps in the Exilic and post-Exilic times; and even here the use of the Seven Lamps to symbolize the Seven Spirits, which lingers in the Church is perhaps not so striking as the fire altars perpetually burning in the Zoroastrian temples. And the influence of the ideas which center in this "element" was so marked that an important province to the southwest of the Caspian Sea was named Azerbaigan Adharbāgān.*

It was also in connection with the names of others of the most holy concepts in Iranian thought that the word "Adar" was so prominently adopted as the name of a Parsi month,† as it is also in both the Jewish and the Assyrian; and this circumstance, though it is not at all the most incisive of the initial features, is yet one of the most convincing, and affords formidable proof of early Iranian influence upon Babylon.

* * *

As this item is so incisive in the impression which it

* The Holy Fire was not perhaps as yet personified in the Gatha, but it is still most reverently mentioned. Some Parsis have, I think, cherished the belief that the fires upon the chief altars in the Fire Temples were originally supernaturally imparted.

† As *ādar* = "fire" was a word otherwise totally unknown to the Semitic languages in this sense, the facts are peculiarly important.

makes upon us I will dwell for a moment longer upon it here.

Here is a month named "Adar" in the Babylonian, the Jewish and the Persian languages. To the Babylonian and the Hebrew, the term is wholly foreign, certainly so if it meant "fire" in Babylonian and Hebrew; but in the Iranian Medo-Persian it is one of the most common of all household terms, also emphatically sanctified for the sacrifice, and its application in Iranian to the naming of a month accentuates its distinction. To which then of the three languages, which each used it for a month, was it originally so applied?

Is it likely that the Babylonians developed out of their own speech, and as if by accident, a word which was externally identical with this Persian term, at once so common and so distinguished, and without the smallest hint from Persian usage applied it also to a month as the Iranians have done—a month being presumably as sacred an interval of time to the Babylonians as it was to the Iranians?*

Was it there used as a pure Syrian word "Adar" in a territory which may have been overrun by Persian influences at some immemorial epoch, (which is one of my present contentions), and which was at an early date soon after the first Exile actually known to have been so overrun, proving that this Iranian word may well have later crept into the earlier Hebrew texts in the ever-repeated recopying of manuscripts? Is it likely then that this term, universally used in Iranian for "fire," should have any other meaning when applied to a Syrian Deity, "fire" having universal claims to worship, an element which could not help, as we might almost say of it, becoming a god? And if the Syrian, Assyrian, or Babylonian

* See the word applied to a Syrian god in Palestine as reported not very long ago.

word meant "fire" also, its Iranian origin is certain. See also Tēbeth, an Iranian word, which is also a Semitic month name, from Avesta, *tap*, "to burn," cp. Tābistan = "summer." Not to speak of Ab as again a month of "water," nor of Tishri as Tishtrya, Tishtar, being a prominent Persian star and later Sirius, *yet also with the others applied to a Persian month*; see even Khisleu which might easily recall Khashathra as contracted, a Parsi month, as "s" = "t," "th," and "l" is easy for "r," etc. This point as regards Adar, we should say in passing, controls this situation here. If one Babylonian month name was Iranian, it is not sound criticism for us to hold to an isolated occurrence; "many or none" should be our principle. Even if, conceivably, the Iranian month names, all intensely native to Medo-Persian as they are, were later taken over from Babylon after having been previously adapted there from Iran in other applications—even upon the supposition that they, while wholly Iranian, had never before as yet been used in Iran as month names till they had been first so used in Babylon—notwithstanding this so singular presupposition, the fact would remain as clearly proved that these Iranian words had singular power in Babylon at an extremely early date. These considerations taken all together almost make us credit the old opinions of a once paramount semi-Iranian influence in Babylon or in pre-Babylonian times as being intimately associated with the intellectual elements of Akad and Sumer.* And this, as we should never forget, was also *a priori* more than probable; for Iran could not have developed even to the position occupied by the first Achæmenid except during the course of some centuries and without having made its energetic influence often felt upon neighboring states.

There is one other serious point here which I would

* Look at Apsu as plain Iranian; Aps with the Semitic nominative suffix. See also Patesi, the name of an Akkadian ruler, Avesta Paitish, etc.

introduce as if in parentheses, though it may not seem to be immediately relevant; it is this. Some advanced scholars seem never to have become at all aware of such as fact as that all the Persian Ameshaspends with many of their satellites, whose names are used for the months and the days of the months, were likewise *Vedic*, though scattered and not numbered six or seven in the RIK; nor yet at all applied in the same way to the calendar. And this all the more connects the entire body of Iranian religious thought with the great southeastern Indian systems rather than with the southwestern Babylonian, for the Vedic is and was a veritable fellow-branch with the Iranian in one and the same vast primeval faith. But this circumstance also imparts immensely greater solidity to the entire structure of the Iranian religious system, showing it to possess a predominant objectivity, which together with its incisive clearness naturally impressed itself upon its neighbor the Assyrian. As we shall be obliged later on to bring in facts which postdate the New Testament and which yet exercise a very important influence upon the issues of this discussion, (see below), we must continue on our preliminary remarks one step further here and refer to some post-Christian elements.

Much additional information of an interior character has been collected by Kohut out of the various early sections of the Talmud, some of it dating so early as before A. D. 226. Prominent among these particulars, and as in analogy with the general Persian atmosphere of the Exile period noted above, would be the favored condition of the Jews under the Parthian Arsacids, which would be available as a point so far back, let us say, as 150 A. D. at least;† and perhaps the still more incisive manifestation of disfavor under the Sasanids, from 226 A. D. on, may be

† Their political representative, the Exile arch, ranked fourth after the sovereign. See Kohut's citation.

also highly valued for our purpose, for persecution sometimes‡ brings out details of intellectual connection more sharply even than sympathetic treatment.* Next to this and as again parallel to what is above cited, Kohut, with a very fair degree of probability indeed, sees Haurvatāt and Ameretatāt in later but still early portions of the Talmud; while the Cinvat Bridge is clearly mentioned somewhere also, though here I can quote only from memory, the very striking particulars of Yasht XXII appear. And what shall we say to the somewhat late but most certain existence of Avesta Būt, Mūsh, and the Ashemaogha? Then still later we have also Talmudic Mittron possibly for Mithra, ur-iel for Hvare-nah, etc., etc.† If these items, thus as it were hastily inserted before our more extended discussion, possess any validity at all, then they should already produce an incipient conviction in our minds and so at once begin to make us believe all the acutely interesting and solemn facts involved in the partially approximate identity of the Persian and Israelitish Exilic lores.

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‡ If not as the general rule.

* At the festivals especially held to the Fire the Persian authorities entered the dwellings of the Jews, and put out all the lights; and so at the festivals in honor of the holy waters they deprived them of its use. See Kohut's citations.

† Aspiration comes and goes; see Kohut everywhere, "ur-" might well be "Hur"—and this easily "Hvar." Those who criticize Kohut too freely should remember that one has to be a critic to criticize a critic. Much that is sagacious is utterly lost upon non-experts. See "Jüdische Angelologie," *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Vol. IV, 1866, by A. Kohut. See also his successors, N. Soderblom, Ernst Bloken, L. H. Gray, etc.